THE ADVANTAGE OF A NATIONAL OBSERVANCE OF DIVINE AND HUMAN LAWS.

A

DISCOURSE

IN DEFENCE OF OUR

ADMIRABLE CONSTITUTION.

BY A LAYMAN,
OF THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

MR. JUSTICE ASHURST'S

MOST EXCELLENT

CHARGE TO THE GRAND JURY,

For the County of MIDDLESEX.

IPSWICH:

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M DCC XCII.

THE Author of the following Diſcourſe is truly ſenſible of the incorrectneſs of it: the only motive that induced him to publiſh it, was, a wiſh to contribute in a ſmall degree, to guard againſt the faſhionable prevalence of Irreligion, and the conſequent diſregard to the Authority of the juſt Government and happy Conſtitution of theſe Kingdoms. With this view only he ſubmits it to the Candour of a diſcerning Public.

PROVERBS XI. 11.

BY THE BLESSING OF THE UPRIGHT THE CITY IS EXALTED; BUT IT IS OVERTHROWN BY THE MOUTH OF THE WICKED.

I ſhall not curiouſly examine the weight of each particular expreſſion in the text; for whether by *the Bleſſing of the upright* be meant the religious regard which good men have towards God, or the providential regard which God has towards good men, it amounts to the ſame; either way, the words afford us this general maxim,—"That where religion and juſt principles prevail, the nation will flouriſh; but where it is tainted with irreligion, and debauched in its principles, there it will tend to deſtruction."—A maxim not drawn from the

ſpeculation of philoſophy, but formed upon reaſon and obſervation, by a royal politician, well verſed in his ſubject; one whoſe chief ſearch was after wiſdom, and his innocent ambition the welfare of his people. The maxims of ſuch men are of great weight, and might expect admittance on their own credit. However, we will make trial of this upon the touchſtone of hiſtory, after which, I will recommend the turning the advantageous ſide of the maxim to ourſelves.

To collect all the paſſages of ſacred hiſtory to this purpoſe, would be to tranſcribe *Moſes and the Prophets.* I ſhall only ſelect a few of the moſt remarkable.

That a voluntary departing from God, throwing off the obedience to poſitive laws, and a confident reliance on our own perſonal wiſdom, are crimes prejudicial to ſociety, we carry about in our unhappy ſelves the fatal teſtimony; wherever we ſee ſin, or folly, or miſery among men, we ſee an evidence of this; and feel the effects of

Adam's guilt in theſe particulars, in the genuine conſequences of his puniſhment.—Crimes that did not deſtroy a ſingle kingdom only, but human nature.

The nations who were put to the ſword, or driven out to make room for the people of *Iſrael* were not puniſhed arbitrarily, and without juſt cauſe; for when the land was promiſed to *Abraham*, the poſſeſſion was deferred for *four hundred* years, becauſe *the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.** And when they took poſſeſſion, they were told, *For the wickedneſs of theſe nations, the Lord doth drive them out from before you.* § And they are cautioned to keep the ſtatutes of God, and not commit any abominations which the men of the land had done. Accordingly the ſubſequent ſucceſſes or diſperſions, the conqueſts or captivities of the *Iſraelites* were the proportioned effects of their obedience or diſobedience to God. Till at length, incorrigible and untutored by long experience, they quite wearied out his favour, and are, at this day, a people

* Gen. 15. 16. § Deut. 9. 4.

ſubſiſting without a country, to be a living lecture to teach all nations among whom they are ſcattered, that *it is God that ruleth in Jacob, and unto the ends of the world.* §

If we turn our eyes to other nations, and carry our enquiries through the four great monarchies, we ſhall meet with the ſame truth. The *Babylonian*, in ſpite of all its grandeur and magnificence, fell for its impiety, according to the prophecies of *Iſaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and *Daniel*; and their kingdom was given to the *Medes* and the *Perſians*, who took poſſeſſion in the middle of a public debauch. * The empire that roſe out of its ruins reads us the ſame lecture: whoever conſiders the boundleſs luſts, inceſts, and lawleſs will of the *Perſian* kings, may manifeſtly diſcern the ſeeds of the *Perſian* ruin; the cauſe that made them ſo wilingly ſubmit to *Alexander*, and paſs themſelves over to the *Grecian* monarchy. This, as it began, and in a great meaſure ended with *Alexander*, is not to be looked upon

§ Pſalm 59. 13. * Dan. 5. 30. 31.

as a regular eſtabliſhed empire, but an indigeſted heap of conqueſts, that tumbled to pieces at his death, and fell into the hands of his captains.

Its ſucceſſor, the *Roman* monarchy, is rich in its inſtructions. "Whoever conſiders their hiſtory, (ſays an eminent writer) will find how uſeful a thing religion was to the governing of armies, to the uniting of the people, to the keeping men good, and to the deterring them from being bad. For never was the fear of God (ſays he) ſo eminently conſpicuous as in that commonwealth." Happy had it been, had their principles and morals been never tainted; but the difference of their manners afterwards, is thus repreſented by their own hiſtorian;—who, ſpeaking of the people's regard to the oath they had taken to one of their conſuls, even in a caſe where the obligation of the oath might appear doubtful, tells us, ſuch was the people's tenderneſs and veneration for religion, that they would not ſtrain, and preſume upon their conſciences: for, adds he, "The neg-

lect of the Gods, which hath overſpread *this* age, was not then come to that height; nor did every man interpret his oaths, and accommodate the laws, to his own intereſt and advantage." The conſequent ruin of the common-wealth is ſufficiently known. The above mentioned politician makes this reflection on their hiſtory. "The religion introduced by *Numa*, was one of the firſt cauſes of the *Roman* felicity: becauſe, religion produced good laws; good laws, good fortune; and good fortune, a good end in whatever they undertook: and, as ſtrictneſs in divine worſhip, and conſcience of oaths are great helps to the advancement of a ſtate; ſo, contempt of the one, and neglect of the other, are great means of its deſtruction. Take away religion, and you take away the foundation of government."

This was the judgment of a moſt celebrated politician, founded upon hiſtorical obſervations, and the evidence of facts; and who can reflect upon theſe great events, and doubt the providence of God; are not

his power and wiſdom and goodneſs manifeſt in theſe glorious diſpenſations. Let us pauſe a while and aſk what is become of all theſe vaſt empires, alas! they have all ſince been deſtroyed, and are no more: by which we may ſee the finger of God directing and governing in a wonderful manner. Particular ſtates, like ſhips at ſea, may be worked each by the maſter of the veſſel; but their ſtation, courſe, and employment in the fleet, are determined by the common admiral, who controuls all their motions.

Society and law preſuppoſe religion; they acknowledge it to be their foundation and ſupport: men are not to be governed but by it, and become monſters without it; it is eſſential to the nature of man, and is what properly diſtinguiſhes him from all other animals. The man therefore, who pretends to have no religion, is an enemy to his ſpecies, to ſociety, law, and government, and ranks himſelf with the beaſts that periſh. He that oppoſes one particular form of government, may find a ſtate

ſomewhere or other to his mind, and become a good citizen; but the man who publicly oppoſes all religion, is like an enemy to all ſocieties and governments, and muſt be a bad citizen wherever he is found. So true is the obſervation of the text, *that by the bleſſing of the upright the city will be exalted, but will be overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.*

It is in vain to complain of government, or of laws, if men are determined not to be influenced by them, were they ever ſo good. It is only transferring the blame of their own miſconduct to thoſe, who would not have it in their power to be very bad, if they had not bad ſubjects to work upon. Let every man do his duty, and it is not poſſible the whole ſhould be otherwiſe than excellent. But if we call upon others to be good, when we are not good ourſelves; if we cry out for reformation, and will not reform; if we recommend what is right by talk only, and never by practices, the effect will be adequate to the cauſe, and nothing done, becauſe words are not deeds; let us

mind ourſelves firſt, and then ſet about the good work of reclaiming others; not in vain glory and oſtentation, but purity of life and manners. If few at firſt, the number will become great by example, and efficacious by union.

Since therefore the happineſs and grandeur of our ſtate is owing to the wiſe contrivance and happy adminiſtration of our civil and religious laws, which are naturally productive of ſo many and ſo ineſtimable public bleſſings, it may not be amiſs to offer in the next place, a conſideration or two that may be of uſe perhaps to bring us to this diſpoſition of mind, and to induce us to a ready and chearful obſervation of our laws, and a dutiful obedience to our lawful governors. Now there is nothing more likely to effect this, than our entertaining a juſt and proper ſenſe both of the wiſdom and excellency of the laws themſelves, and of their comparative excellency above thoſe of the neighbouring ſtates. As to the wiſe and excellent contrivance of

our laws, the very origin of them is in ſome meaſure, a preſumptive argument for it: for we have them either from immemorial preſcription, and the confirmed approbation of many ages, or from the united wiſdom of the ableſt and greateſt men we can pitch upon to repreſent us in our great national council—ſo that they are all of them the reſult of the wiſdom of our earlieſt anceſtors, confirmed by a long experience of their great utility, exalted and improved by the advantages of modern diſcoveries; and if the bare origin of our laws does in ſome meaſure evince their intrinſic worth, ſo much more compleatly does the purport and general tendency of them; whether we conſider that dependance and mutual check, which all orders of men amongſt us have on one another, or whether we regard that due temperance of power, that wiſe proportion of liberty in the people, and power in the prince, that neither can the prince, in effect, be a prince at all, if he governs ill, nor the people either happy or ſafe, if capriciouſly diſobedient; or whether we reſpect that

Chriſtian and merciful diſpoſition of our laws, even to offenders, free from thoſe cruelties ſo frequently practiſed, and yet with ſo little ſucceſs, in foreign countries, where the racked and weary ſoul has ſo often wiſhed to take its leave, and is cruelly not ſuffered to depart, but obliged, under tyrannic uſurpation, to undergo all the agonies and pains, to which an arbitrary government, and a falſe and bloody religion has condemned them.

As to the comparative excellency of our laws, above thoſe of the neighbouring nations, they, who are but little verſed in thoſe countries, need not be told the difference; and thoſe, who are not at all, will ſcarcely believe it, if they hear it; and indeed it would be difficult to enlarge upon this point, without ſeeming to draw a libel upon all or moſt of the neighbouring ſtates. I ſhall only obſerve, that foreigners, of whatever nation, who have either ſeen our country, or converſed much with our countrymen abroad, do never fail to make the compariſon, and lament the difference.

Next to the entertaining a good opinion of the wiſdom and excellency of our laws, give me leave to obſerve, that there cannot be a ſtronger motive to the practice and obſervation of them, than what proceeds from a thorough ſenſe and conviction of the truth of our religion, in contradiſtinction I mean, to thoſe principles of *deiſm*, with which the world is every day more and more infected. And doubtleſs one of the chief ends of our Creator in bleſſing mankind with a revelation of his will, was the better regulation and firmer ſupport of civil government among his creatures. The wiſe legiſlators of antiquity, quickly found out the neceſſity of laying the foundation in religious principles, and were therefore forced, for want of a truly revealed religion, to vamp up fictitious ones to ſerve the ends of government: and how indeed can any government ſubſiſt without that general bondage of all human ſociety; *oaths*, and *oaths* are a mere jeſt, if their validity be founded upon any thing elſe than a thorough conviction of the divine authority of the faith we ſwear by. Beſides 'tis

evident, mankind are not to be dealt with without hopes and fears of ſomething to come, ſtrong enough to keep them cloſe to their duty, when no human eye looks on. No laws of man can ever do this; for how ſhall they reach our private thoughts, or influence our ſecret actions: nothing can effect this, but an awful ſenſe of that pure and juſt Being, whoſe exiſtence fills all Heaven and Earth; who ſees in one view all that is in the whole extent of the univerſe, and who is privy to the moſt minute thoughts that paſs in all our hearts. But where the mind is not duly tinctured with a religious ſenſe, little will the wiſeſt human laws avail, ſince they may eaſily be rendered worſe than none, by the cunning and ſubtle evaſions of thoſe who ought to obey them. A conſideration that ſhews us, how much it behoves the magiſtracy of any country, to lend the ſtrongeſt aid they can, to the good cauſe of religion, virtue, and morality; for when that goes to wreck, the diſſolution of all civil government muſt cloſely follow.

And now, my countrymen, after this ſurvey of the great excellency of thoſe laws, by which we have the happineſs to be governed; thoſe laws which ſo manifeſtly tend to procure us wealth and ſtrength, peace and plenty at home, and reſpect and fear abroad; what can be more natural than to endeavour to ſtir up in ourſelves, a zealous inclination to contribute what we can to the preſervation and continuance of thoſe ineſtimable bleſſings we reap from our preſent happy conſtitution. And to this end, let us be cautious to the laſt degree, how we needleſsly ſuffer our public affections to be poiſoned by the artifices of thoſe who *pretend* indeed to be our trueſt friends; but it is to be feared, are in *reality*, our moſt dangerous enemies. To thoſe who know mankind, the diſtinction is not hard to make, if the one and the other be but put to the teſt of cool and calm reflection; when, for inſtance, we ſee men labouring with all their might, on account of a few pretended ſmall errors of government; when we ſee them endeavouring by all methods, direct and indirect, to break the union

of the prince and people; that union which all men *know*, is almoſt as terrible to our neighbours, as even our armaments, we may reſt aſſured, that ſuch men are only *pretended* friends to their country: for were they *really* ſo, they never would endeavour to remedy ſmall pretended evils, by having recourſe to that greateſt miſchief that can well befall a ſtate; namely, the bringing the government of it into the hatred or contempt of the people.

In the ſeditious pamphlets with which the world is daily peſtered, we are told much of bribery, and corruption, by places of preferment. 'Tis to be wiſhed the authors and diſperſers of them, would give us a deſcant upon another kind of corruption, they have as yet told us nothing of, I mean, that moſt dangerous corruption of the heart, which proceeds, though not from places of preferment, yet from the want of them. For among all the ſprings of action, by which mankind are moved, there are none more ſtrong and potent, *than envy and diſappointed ambition; none*

that have in all ages and countries, more contributed to the confuſion and down-fall of civil government. How much therefore does it behove all true lovers of their country, to diſcountenance, as far as in them lies, all ſuch pretended patriots, as are manifeſtly influenced in all their actions, by this moſt deteſtable ſort of corruption; and let the indefatigable zeal of theſe men, (which we ſee is able to unite them, though they are *as different, as white and black* in all other principles) let it, I ſay, animate all truly loyal ſubjects to do their beſt, to promote the unity, peace, and welfare of their country.

Surely, no man, who duly reflects on our happy conſtitution, can ſeriouſly think it can eaſily be altered for the better. If the full enjoyment of our religion, liberties, and properties; the due, regular, and impartial execution of our laws; the extent of our trade, and our ſecurity from foreign invaſions;—if theſe are circumſtances, capable of rendering a nation happy, we then, with truth and juſtice, may ſay, in

the words of Moſes, to the children of Iſrael, *What nation is there ſo great, who hath God ſo nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And, what nation is there ſo great, that hath ſtatutes and judgments ſo righteous as all this law which is ſet before you this day* ?*

'Tis plain therefore, that if we can but bring ourſelves, to give credit to the impartial relations of our own ſenſes, we have at preſent, much real and ſubſtantial happneſs at ſtake; and if we do but act up to the uſual good ſenſe of our nation, tis now fully in our power, happily to ſecure the ſame to ourſelves, and our poſterity for many generations. Let us but beware *how we ſplit upon* one dangerous rock, and we are ſafe——we are a free-born people, and therefore naturally jealous of all tyranical invaſions of our liberties, rights, and properties;——and doubtleſs, a very brave and laudable principle it is, and we do well to cheriſh it: but then, the miſchief of it is,

* Deut. iv. 7. 8

that happy as we are, in theſe generous notions, they are apt, ſometimes, to produce an evil of the moſt dangerous conſequence to our ſtate. For hence it is, that ill-deſigning men are often enabled (without having the truth of the argument on their ſide) to raiſe a great deal of popular diſcontent againſt our governors; and as we are often betrayed into this way of thinking, by true and generous principles miſapplied, we ſhould therefore be the more vigilant and careful how we are thereby ſeduced. For as in our natural bodies, thoſe diſeaſes are often found the moſt dangerous, which proceed from the overflowings of a ſtrong conſtitution; ſo in bodies politic, thoſe diſorders have often the moſt miſchievous effects, which take their riſe from the moſt wholeſome principles, ill applied by the art of deſigning men. But I am ſenſible, that I have the leſs reaſon to expatiate upon this head, as I am writing in a county, * remarkable in our hiſtories for their loyalty to the crown, and their firm attachments to the true intereſt of the nation; and who have always readily joined to oppoſe the

* Suffolk.

rebellious diſturbers of their country's peace. May we alſo be animated with a truly loyal ſpirit, and not ſuffer ourſelves either to be frightened out of our allegiance, by the outcries of a diſaffected people; or to be yet more fooliſhly cajoled out of it, by the puerile declamations of their leaders. But let us go on in our duty, not noiſily and tumultuouſly, but (like true lovers of our country's peace) peacibly and quietly, though ſteadily and reſolutely.

I cannot finiſh this ſubject better, than with the concluſion of a Sermon of our late good and pious Biſhop*, upon a public occaſion.

One thing more is yet behind—and O that my voice could reach the remoteſt corners of the land, to proclaim to all it's inhabitants, the wiſhes of Britain, that her children would dwell together in unity; that they would not employ their ſhining talents, and extenſive attainments, merely in thwarting each other; that they would

* Dr. Horne's Sermon before the Houſe of Commons, at Weſtminſter, Feb. 4th. 1780.

not revive old jealouſies and animoſities, or ſow new ones; that they would aboliſh enmity, and ſtrain every nerve in the proſecution of this only contention—who ſhall ſtand firſt, and do moſt ſervice, in the cauſe of their King, and their Country.

Such is the nature of the reformation to be deſired. Bleſſed are the eyes that ſhall ſee it; but ſtill more bleſſed the hands that ſhall have contributed to effect it! Viewed in the aggregate, it may ſeem difficult—it may ſeem impoſſible. But let us divide the taſk among us, and it will become eaſy. Let each of us undertake for ONE, and let us begin TO DAY. "Then will the Lord "be gracious to his inheritance, as in the "ancient days, in the generations of old; "the Lord will make our way proſperous, "and we ſhall have good ſucceſs;" we have had ſome—we ſhall have more—"the Lord will give STRENGTH unto his "people; the Lord will give his people the "bleſſing of PEACE."

THE END.

The following moſt *Excellent Charge* of SIR WILLIAM ASHURST, delivered to the GRAND JURY for the COUNTY of MIDDLESEX, November 19, 1792, breathes ſo much the true Spirit of the Engliſh Law, and is ſo well ſuited to curb the Preſumptious Spirit of the Times, that it muſt be read with Pleaſure by every true Engliſhman—it is therefore hoped no Apology need be made for adding it in this Place.

" *Gentlemen of the Grand Jury,*

" I HAVE the honour of meeting you upon the ſtated return of this ſolemnity of putting in execution the Criminal Law, and of bringing ſuch offenders to juſtice as have been guilty of a breach of the Law. Gentlemen, there is no Nation in the world that can boaſt of a better Syſtem of Government than that under which we have the happineſs to live. Here no man is ſo high as to be above the reach of the Law, and no man ſo low as not to be within the protection of it.—The Power of the Crown on the one hand, and the Liberty of the Subject on the other, are both effectually ſecured, and at the ſame time kept within their proper limits. Gentlemen, the Law of this Country only lays ſuch reſtraints on the actions of individuals, as are neceſſary for the ſafety and good order of the Community at large; and ſuch reſtraints are ſo far from being infringements on Civil Liberty, that Civil Liberty could not ſubſiſt without them: for if every

man were left to the free and uncontrouled impulſe of his own mind, as in a ſtate of Nature, no man could be ſecure of his perſon or property, and the weak would become a prey to the ſtrong. But in a ſtate of Civil Government, each individual grows ſtrong in the ſtrength of the Community.

" Gentlemen, it is Civil Liberty that is the parent of induſtry, and conſequently of wealth. For in a ſtate of Nature there was no ſecurity to property, and no man thought of property further than for the momentary ſupply of his own immediate neceſſities. But when men have entered into ſociety, the conſciousneſs that their property is ſecure, induces to habits of induſtry. Man in that ſtate does not bend his purſuits to the mere ſupply of his preſent wants, but looks forward to future ages. The mutual wants of men produce a mutual ſupply: this leads to Trade and Commerce, and extend a man's connections beyond the narrow limits of his own family: and thus mutual wants bring mutual happineſs. But, Gentlemen, as a preliminary ſtep to the procuring of theſe enjoyments, it was neceſſary that mankind, on entering into Society, ſhould give up into the hands of Government that ſpecies of Liberty which reſulted from the perfect equality of man, and where no man had a right to impoſe on another a rule of conduct, but every man, as far as his ſtrength carried him through, followed his own will. But, Gentlemen, a ſtate of Society cannot ſubſiſt without Subordination; there muſt be general rules laid down by the coercive power of the State wherever it reſides, as a ſtandard by which the actions of men are to be meaſured and puniſhed, ſo as to prevent them from being injurous to the rights aud happineſs of their fellow-citizens. And there muſt be a coercive power in ſuch hands as the Conſtitution has thought fit to place it, to enforce ſuch laws and rules of action as the wiſdom of the State has preſcribed. Happily for us, Gentlemen, we are not bound by any Laws but ſuch as are ordained by the virtual conſent of the whole Kingdom, and which

every man has the means of knowing; and if men judged right, they would be perſuaded their happineſs entirely depended on a due obſervance and ſupport of theſe Laws. There have, however, under the beſt ſyſtems of Government, been found men of corrupt principles, who, having forſaken honeſt induſtry, wiſh to throw every thing into confuſion, and to live by rapine and plunder; when that is the caſe, it is become neceſſary for the coercive power of the State to lend its reſtraining hand, and to puniſh offences of ſuch a flagrant nature. There is no proſpect of Reformation till ſuch corrupt members be cut off, to prevent others being contaminated by their example. But, though crimes muſt not go unpuniſhed, I may venture to affirm, that there is no Nation whatever that is ſo careful of the natural Liberty of the Subject, or has made ſuch humane proviſions for offenders, as the Nation in which we live.

" Gentlemen, the ordaining of this preliminary ſtep—the Inqueſt, ſuch as that on which you now appear, compoſed of Gentlemen of rank and figure in the Country—is a guard and caution unknown in every other Country. And after you have given your opinion that the matter is fit for further inquiry, the accuſed has a right to have his Indictment tried by a Jury, which is a moſt invaluable privilege.

" The Law, Gentlemen, is no leſs careful in protecting men's civil rights. There is no Country where the Law is more uprightly or more impartially adminiſtered. For this bleſſing we are indebted to the wiſe and prudent form of our Conſtitution, and to that ſecurity which naturally reſults from it. Hence it is that our Commerce has been extended beyond the example of all former ages. And we all know, that this is the caſe of every Manufacturing Town in this Country. Such is the flouriſhing ſtate of this Kingdom, and ſuch the happy fruits of Liberty and Peace, one would ſuppoſe there was not a man in the Kingdom

man were left to the free and uncontrouled impulſe of his own mind, as in a ſtate of Nature, no man could be ſecure of his perſon or property, and the weak would become a prey to the ſtrong. But in a ſtate of Civil Government, each individual grows ſtrong in the ſtrength of the Community.

" Gentlemen, it is Civil Liberty that is the parent of induſtry, and conſequently of wealth. For in a ſtate of Nature there was no ſecurity to property, and no man thought of property further than for the momentary ſupply of his own immediate neceſſities. But when men have entered into ſociety, the conſciousneſs that their property is ſecure, induces to habits of induſtry. Man in that ſtate does not bend his purſuits to the mere ſupply of his preſent wants, but looks forward to future ages. The mutual wants of men produce a mutual ſupply: this leads to Trade and Commerce, and extend a man's connections beyond the narrow limits of his own family: and thus mutual wants bring mutual happineſs. But, Gentlemen, as a preliminary ſtep to the procuring of theſe enjoyments, it was neceſſary that mankind, on entering into Society, ſhould give up into the hands of Government that ſpecies of Liberty which reſulted from the perfect equality of man, and where no man had a right to impoſe on another a rule of conduct, but every man, as far as his ſtrength carried him through, followed his own will. But, Gentlemen, a ſtate of Society cannot ſubſiſt without Subordination; there muſt be general rules laid down by the coercive power of the State wherever it reſides, as a ſtandard by which the actions of men are to be meaſured and puniſhed, ſo as to prevent them from being injurous to the rights aud happineſs of their fellow-citizens. And there muſt be a coercive power in ſuch hands as the Conſtitution has thought fit to place it, to enforce ſuch laws and rules of action as the wiſdom of the State has preſcribed. Happily for us, Gentlemen, we are not bound by any Laws but ſuch as are ordained by the virtual conſent of the whole Kingdom, and which

every man has the means of knowing; and if men judged right, they would be perſuaded their happineſs entirely depended on a due obſervance and ſupport of theſe Laws. There have, however, under the beſt ſyſtems of Government, been found men of corrupt principles, who, having forſaken honeſt induſtry, wiſh to throw every thing into confuſion, and to live by rapine and plunder; when that is the caſe, it is become neceſſary for the coercive power of the State to lend its reſtraining hand, and to puniſh offences of ſuch a flagrant nature. There is no proſpect of Reformation till ſuch corrupt members be cut off, to prevent others being contaminated by their example. But, though crimes muſt not go unpuniſhed, I may venture to affirm, that there is no Nation whatever that is ſo careful of the natural Liberty of the Subject, or has made ſuch humane proviſions for offenders, as the Nation in which we live.

" Gentlemen, the ordaining of this preliminary ſtep—the Inqueſt, ſuch as that on which you now appear, compoſed of Gentlemen of rank and figure in the Country—is a guard and caution unknown in every other Country. And after you have given your opinion that the matter is fit for further inquiry, the accuſed has a right to have his Indictment tried by a Jury, which is a moſt invaluable privilege.

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who did not feel it, and feel it with a grateful heart; and yet, I am ſorry to ſay, there are men of dark and gloomy hearts, who would wiſh to overturn the general fabric of our Conſtitution, which has been the work of Ages, and would give us in return a ſyſtem of univerſal Anarchy and Confuſion. There have been Publications in which the Authors diſclaim all idea of Subordination, as inconſiſtent with the natural rights and equality of mankind, and recommend the example of a neighbouring Nation as a model for our imitation. Alas! Humanity is called upon to pity the deplorable ſituation of that Country: but it is a very ill choſen example of imitation to hold forth to a Nation in a moſt flouriſhing ſtate of happineſs; and it is pretty extraordinary, that, with our eyes open, we ſhould wiſh to plunge ourſelves into the ſame abyſs of miſery with that neighbouring Nation. One might naturally have expected, that doctrines ſo abſurd, ſo nonſenſical, and ſo pernicious, would have been treated with that contempt they deſerve, and would have ſunk into oblivion. But when one not only find ſuch tenets held, but Societies of men formed, who meet with the expreſs purpoſe of diſſeminating ſuch doctrines, and who hold a regular correſpondence with other Societies in a neighbouring Nation, it is time for every ſober man who is at all intereſted in the ſafety and welfare of his Country, as much as in him lies, to endeavour to cruſh ſuch unconſtitutional and pernicious doctrines. Gentlemen, his Majeſty, who is always anxious and watchful over the ſafety and proſperity of his People, did ſome time ago iſſue His Royal Proclamation, which received the approbation of every good Citizen of this Kingdom. And, Gentlemen, I am afraid the circumſtances which gave riſe to that Proclamation are not yet ſo totally at an end, as to make it unreaſonable for me now to recall them to your recollection. Gentlemen, His Majeſty in that Proclamation ſtates, THAT DIVERS WICKED AND SEDITIOUS WRITINGS, &c. (Here his Lordſhip recited the ſubſtance of the Proclamation.

" Gentlemen, I cannot help expreſſing the happineſs I feel, that his Majeſty's Proclamation has been received with every mark of reſpect through the Kingdom; and there are ſcarcely any parts of the Kingdom that have not preſented an Addreſs to His Majeſty in conſequence of it, and who have not expreſſed their hatred and abhorrence of ſuch pernicious doctrines, and ſhewn they are not to be duped out of their happineſs by the ſhallow artifices of ſuch men as have nothing to loſe, and who would wiſh to enrich themſelves by the deſtruction of all Government. His Majeſty's Servants and Miniſters have paid due attention to this Proclamation, ſo far as to have inſtituted proceedings againſt ſeveral Libellous and Seditious Publications But, Gentlemen, t ugh the Proclamation has tended to produce the deſired effect, it has not done it ſo effectually as to prevent the diſſeminating of ſuch kind of Writings; and all ſober men ought to be diligent in ſupporting the cauſe of Order and Government.

" Gentlemen, I truſt your minds will be impreſſed with theſe ideas, and that you will be aſſiduous in ſupporting our preſent form of Government. Such of you as are in a private ſtation, will endeavour, by your example, to diſcountenance ſuch kind of doctrines; and thoſe of you who are cloathed with the Robes of Magiſtracy, will be diligent in exerting yourſelves to bring to Juſtice all who have been guilty of a breach of the Law, by publiſhing tenets of that pernicious nature.

" I ſhall not take up more of your time, but recommend it to you to proceed with all due diſpatch to the Public Service; and I have no doubt that you will diſcharge your duty in a manner honorable to yourſelves, and ſo as to deſerve the Thanks of your Country."

FINIS.

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